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Educator's attitudes towards children, handicapped children and mainstreaming

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EDUCATOR'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHILDREN, HANDICAPPED CHILDREN AND MAINSTREAMING

by

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Since the passage of the first public law in the United States dealing with the education of people with special needs, there has been a continual flow of both case and statutory laws affecting the education of the handicapped person.

In relatively recent years the concept of least restrictive placement has evolved from both case and statutory law. Two cases, the 1970 ruling in Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia (1972) established that school districts must provide a free, equal and appropriate education to all children. Zettel and Weintraub (1978) stated:

> The basic precedent emerging from the PARC and Mills decisions was that all school aged children, regardless of the severity of their handicaps, were entitled to a free public education. The rulings further demonstrated the intent of the courts that handicapped children were to have equal access to all public school programs--academic, vocational, and extracurricular--that were

> afforded to nonhandicapped children. Attention was also directed to the manner in which these children were identified, evaluated, and placed in special education programs and what types of programs were preferred. Consequently, widespread application of due process of law and the concept of least restrictive environment came into use. (p. 10)

Important federal legislation dealing with special education needs were also passed. Most notable were Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which regulated use of federal funding as it pertained to special education programming (Turnbull, 1978, p. 523).

The Education for all Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) was passed in 1975. PL 94-142 established procedures for the education of handicapped children based on the principles of zero rejection, nondiscriminating evaluation, appropriateness of educational placement, due process and least restrictive placement (Turnbull, 1978, p. 523).

Other important court rullings were PARC, LeBanks v. Spears and Maryland Association for Retarded Children v. Maryland where the courts ruled that "whenever a handicapped student is to be placed, he is to be included in a regular program in preference to a special program and that he is

to be educated in the regular school environment rather than in the special school" (Turnbull, 1978, p. 525).

These landmark decisions entrenched the concept of least restrictive placement into our everyday educational process. They put added responsibilities not only on the special education teacher but on the regular education teacher as well. Because for the first time regular education teachers were being required by law to accept special education students into their classrooms. Mann (1978) quoting a National Advisory Council on Education Professions Development, 1976 article entitled "Mainstreaming: Helping Teachers Meet the Challenge" wrote:

> with rapid growth and widespread support, the mainstreaming movement has the potential to affect all classrooms of the estimated two million public school teachers. In fact, more than 30 percent of the almost eight million handicapped children are now estimated as being in regular classrooms. (p. 15)

Purpose of This Paper

Because most school districts have had no opportunity to function under the least restrictive placement concept mandated by PL 94-142, and because all school districts will be required to comply by the year 1980 (Rausher, 1976), it was the purpose of this paper to research

the literature to determine the attitudes of the regular education teacher towards mainstreaming and how those attitudes may affect the mainstreaming process.

Particular attention was paid to the following concerns: (1) implications for the regular education classroom teacher; (2) implications for the special education teacher; (3) implications for the special education student; and (4) implications for the future of mainstreaming the special education student.

Scope and Limitations

For the purpose of this study it was determined to survey the literature over the last ten years as it pertained to the attitudes teachers hold towards children in general. Particular attention was paid to the attitudes regular education teachers hold towards the mainstreaming of the handicapped student.

Definitions

For the purpose of this paper the following definitions are applicable.

Handicapped Student--all children who fall within the definition of PL 94-142 as having exceptional educational needs (EEN).

Mainstreaming--Mainstreaming refers to the temporal, instructional, and social integration of eligible exceptional children with normal peers based on an ongoing, individually determined, educational planning and

programming process and requires clarafication of responsibility among regular and special education, administrative, instructional, and supportive personnel. (Kaufman, Gottlieb, Agard, and Kukic, 1975, p. 4)

Regular Education Teacher--a teacher of academic (mathematics, social sciences, English, reading and science), vocational (industrial arts, automotive repair, etc.), or ancillary (art, music, physical education, etc.) classes, comprised primarily of students with no exceptional educational needs.

Special Education Teacher--teacher responsible for the education of the handicapped student.

Summary

In summary, the purpose of this paper was to investigate the attitudes of regular education teachers towards mainstreaming. This chapter outlined the questions researched, namely: how these attitudes may affect teacher interaction with the handicapped student; what subsequent implications there may be for both the regular and special education teacher; and the potential ramifications these attitudes may have on the future of mainstreaming. The scope and limitations of the research were outlined and

pertinent definitions were given. Chapter II presents a review of the literature. Chapter III will discuss the findings of the literature as it affects the regular and special education teacher, the EEN student and the future of mainstreaming.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The passage of recent state and federal laws brought an ever increasing awareness to the needs of the special education student. In particular:

> the passage of Public Law (P. L.) 93-380 and P. L. 94-142 and the subsequent implementation of state mandates for the appropriate education of all handicapped children necessitate concern for the degree to which professionals are competent to deal with these children. This legislation requires a comprehensive evaluation to determine individual goals and objectives and a resulting educational placement in accordance with the "least restrictive alternative" concept. That is, the educational plan must allow for student participation within the mainstream to the extent possible. (Horne, 1979, p. 61)

With the concept of the least restrictive alternative becoming more entrenched in our schools daily it was felt by this researcher that the interaction that occurs between the handicapped student and the regular education teacher, in the mainstream, may be of utmost importance.

The attitude, or the level of acceptance, that a regular education teacher may have towards a handicapped student might affect the relationship between the two and ultimately the effectiveness of the mainstream program. Horne (1979) wrote "Of immediate concern are the attitudes and expectations of professionals, peers, and parents toward the handicapped, since they may affect their ultimate adjustment and performance" (p. 61).

The purpose of this paper was to review the literature pertaining to the attitudes of educators towards children in general, and handicapped children in particular.

Educator's Attitudes Towards Children, Handicapped Children and Mainstreaming

Robert K. Merton (1948) introduced the term "self-fulfilling prophesy" he stated, "the self-fulfilling (prophesy), whereby fears are translated into reality, operates only in the absence of deliberate institutional control" (p. 193). He defended the following position--what we expect based on our stereotyped attitudes is what we will eventually perceive. Merton claimed that through education and experience we can overcome and change our stereotypes; and although Merton's article concerned itself primarily with attitudes held towards ethnic and racial groupings, it is the belief of this author that the groundwork he laid is

indeed applicable to the study of the effects of teacher attitudes towards the handicapped student. If nothing else Merton left us with a term (i.e., "self-fulfilling prophesy") that will be much discussed in this review.

Kvaraceus (1956) conducted a study to determine the relative Acceptance-Rejection of exceptional students. He surveyed 84 subjects enrolled in a course dealing with the exceptional child. The subjects were to rank order from a list of eight categories (Mentally Retarded, Emotionally Disturbed, Crippled and Physically Handicapped, Delinquent, Blind and Partially Seeing, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Superior and Gifted, and Speech Defect) the group of children each would most prefer to teach, which they would least prefer to teach, which they knew the most about and which they knew the least about. Kvaraceus found that the most preferred group was the Superior and Gifted followed by the Emotionally Disturbed, Crippled and Physically Handicapped, Delinquent, Blind and Partially Seeing, Speech Defect, Mentally Retarded, and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. More important than the actual rankings, he discovered that there was a definite correlation between the knowledge the subjects had of a handicapping condition and how well it was accepted by them, he wrote "the rank order correlations indicate a strong and wholesome tendency for the respondents to prefer to teach in those areas in which they

believed themselves best informed" (p. 330). The obvious ramifications are, the more we can educate the educators the more receptive they may become towards the handicapped student.

Haring, Stern, and Cruickshank (1958) discussed the importance teacher attitudes play in the education of exceptional children. They undertook a study to design an instrument for measuring attitudes of teachers toward exceptional children; to determine whether attitudes could be modified to assure greater acceptance; and to determine to what extent increase acceptance of exceptional children may affect teacher's relationships with these children (p. 1).

In the course of their research they supplied evidence to support the theory that the attitudes that teachers hold toward a group will influence the attitudes of the children whom they teach. Relating this theory to the exceptional child they state that:

> it is being assumed that if, through certain educational techniques, one can modify the attitudes of regular classroom teachers toward a realistic acceptance of exceptional children, these attitudes of acceptance on the part of teachers will also influence children in the direction of realistic acceptance. (p. 12)

Carl Rogers (1959) confirmed the need for acceptance, empathy, caring, etc. in order to affect learning in a psycho-therapy setting. Rogers stated that there is a carry over into the field of education, he believes that the teacher needs to be real in his feelings and there must be an acceptance of the student.

Stillings (1959), Semmel (1959), Mill (1960) and Dettre (1964) all wrote articles concerned with the effect attitudes of teachers have toward their students' learning. All of the above researchers determined that attitudes do indeed play a significant role in the education of children. Semmel (1959), however, discovered little difference between the attitudes of special education teachers and regular education teachers. She found, that even though the special education teacher had more education and familiarity with the handicapped child, the attitudes of both groups of teachers were similar. This is in conflict with Kvaraceus (1956), who found in his study that the greater the level of information the higher the level of acceptance. Semmel (1959) wrote, "whatever the explanation for the lack of significant difference in the attitudes held by the two groups, the results appear to imply that having greater knowledge does not necessarily result in a greater extent of positive attitudes toward the retarded" (p. 572).

Douglas Fenderson (1964) expanded on Carl Rogers' (1959) theories. Fenderson gave Rogers' theory relevancy to the area of exceptional children. He wrote:

> Carl Rogers an eminent psychologist, points out that theoretical views and "helping" techniques are of secondary importance. A personal belief in one's ability to help and the ability to communicate an honest interest in the client (student) are more important. Conversely, his research shows that one can be very skillful in applying techniques associated with helping people; but lacking a genuine interest in them, very little will be accomplished. (p. 27)

In 1966, Warren and Turner completed a study almost identical to Kvaraceus' (1956) investigation. Subjects (N=405) were asked to rank order their preference of handicaps. The choices were: (1) Academically Talented; (2) Anti-Social; (3) Brain Injured; (4) Hearing Impaired; (5) Mildly Retarded; (6) Moderately to Severely Retarded; and (7) Sight Handicapped. Although the categorical titles were somewhat different than in Kvaraceus' study, generally both studies asked for the same handicapping conditions to be ranked.

As in 1956, Warren and Turner (1966) found that the most widely preferred grouping was the Academically Talented (Superior and Gifted) and the least preferred were the Brain Injured and the Moderately to Severely Retarded.

Warren and Turner also found a high correlation between familiarity with a handicap and a preference for that handicap; an additional high correlation existed between the subjects' educational background and their handicap preferences (p. 140). This seems to substantiate Kvaraceus' original thesis and refute the statements made by Semmel (1959).

Combs and Harper (1967) conducted research into the effect labeling may have on the attitudes of educators toward handicapped children. They wrote "since teacher attitudes are important in determining the adjustment of the child, it would be significant to learn what factors lie behind the development of positive attitudes toward the exceptional child" (p. 399).

Pygmalion in the Classroom, by Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968), reintroduced Merton's (1948) theory of the "self-fulfilling prophesy." Their study included the following components: teachers were given information (at random) about a group of children, some were labeled "bloomers" others "normal" and a third group "dull;" all the children were pretested and posttested: posttesting showed significant gains in standardized achievement test scores and in classroom grade achievement. Rosenthal and Jacobsen concluded that children will show gains based solely on the premise that the teacher expected those gains; and also, unfortunately, children will not show gains based solely

on the premise that the teacher does not expect them--the self-fulfilling prophesy.

Richard Snow (1969) attacked Rosenthal and Jacobsen's research. He argued that their research would have been judged unacceptable if it had been submitted to an A.P.A. journal. Snow criticized "Pygmalion" for having serious measurement problems, a lack of adequate data analysis, a reporting style that made it difficult to verify the data and its accompanying analysis, and finally, he found fault with the graphs/tables which he stated were misleading and misrepresentative of the data.

Snow did not, however, deny the apparent fact that teacher attitude does indeed play an important role. He wrote:

> Teacher expectancy may be a powerful phenomenon which, if understood, could be used to gain much of positive value in education. Rosenthal and Jacobsen will have made an important contribution if their work prompts others to do sound research in this area. But their study had not come close to providing adequate demonstration of the phenomenon or understanding of its process. "Pygmalion," inadequately and prematurely reported in book and magazine form, has performed a disservice to teachers and schools, to users and developers of mental tests, and perhaps worst of all, to parents and children

whose newly gained expectations may not prove quite so self-fulfilling. (p. 199)

Tali Conine (1969) researched the levels of acceptance and rejection of disabled persons by teachers and found no significant differences between (among) the mean scores of: (1) Caucasion and Negro teachers; (2) various age groupings; (3) teachers of different religious affiliations; (4) teachers with close contact or with little or no contact with a disabled person; (5) teachers who were closely acquainted or related to a disabled person and those teachers who were not; (6) teachers with bachelors degree or graduate degree; (7) teachers in different specialities; and (8) teachers exposed to formal educational experiences related to disabled persons and those without such exposure (p. 280).

Conine also found that:

teacher attitudes appear to be similiar to the attitudes of the public. Therefore, it may be hypothesized that unfavorable attitudes of the public toward disabled people may, at least in part, reflect the reactions of prejudiced school teachers. If the unfavorable attitude of the public is to be changed, then surely favorable attitudes must be fostered among teachers who influence the value system of our future generations. (p. 280)

Brophy and Good (1970) researched the manner in which teachers communicate different performance expectations to different children. They found that teachers will expect a better performance from those children for which they had high expectations. Also teachers were more likely to praise these children more when expected performance was achieved. In contrast, the teachers were more likely to accept poor performance from a student for whom they had low expectations and were less likely to praise these students when a good performance occurred. They wrote:

> teachers do, in fact, communicate differential performance expectations to different children through their classroom behavior, and the nature of this differential treatment is such as to encourage the children to begin to respond in ways which would confirm teacher expectancies. In short, the data confirm the hypothesis that teachers' expectations function as self-fulfilling prophesies, and they indicate some of the intervening behavioral mechanisms involved in the process. (p. 373).

Henrikson (1971) offered a review of the literature as it pertained to the theory of the self-fulfilling prophesy. After citing the pros (Rosenthal and Jacobsen, 1968; Beez, 1967; and Conn, et al., 1967) and the cons (Jensen, 1968; and Caliborn, 1969) and the arguments of those who accept the presence of such a concept (Snow, 1969;

Clasen, 1970; and Aiken, 1969), but point out the need for a different analysis of the data for more concrete evidence, Henrikson called for more research. He wrote "the concept of the self-fulfilling prophesy as it is applicable to education demands further research to clarify its applicability to the classroom" (p. 428). He did make a final statement that was significant and in itself calls for more research in this area. He wrote:

> it is possible that the Kerner Report (1968), asking for more prescoool intervention programs for the disadvantaged child, overlooks a basic premise--that a change in the quality of the childs' education can be effected through nothing more than a change in the teachers' expectations of his abilities in the classroom. (p. 429)

Rothbart, Dalfen, and Barrett (1971) concurred with Brophy and Good (1970) when they found in their research that teachers give more attention to the "bright" students, and that due to the greater level of attention the "bright" students receive, they in turn responded/participated in class at a higher frequency than prior to the study.

Good and Brophy (1971), prompted by the uproar created over Rosenthal and Jacobsen's (1968) research, conducted a study to see if the concept of self-fulfilling prophesy did exist. They asked teachers to rate their students according to achievement and made no effort to influence their decisions; they then observed the teachers

and students to determine if the teachers treated the "highs" and "lows" differently. They concluded that "differential treatment of the two groups consistent with the hypothesis occurred in all four classrooms" (p. 52).

Good and Brophy (1971) also found that teachers would tend to "coach" the "high" students when they would get stuck on a question, but would not do so for the "low" students under similar circumstances, instead the teacher would simply call on another student thereby terminating the exchange with the lower level student.

They also found that the "high" rated students were twice as likely to receive praise when correct and only one-third as likely to receive criticism when wrong. In general they determined that the interactions between teachers and the group rated as "high" was both quantitatively and qualitatively better than exchanges with the "low" level students. They further stated that:

> teacher behavior flowing from low expectations interferes with progress in two ways. First, it limits the amount of material that a child can learn--partly because his teachers do not try to teach him as much and partly because they give up much more easily and quickly in teaching him the things they do try to teach. Second, such behavior stifles a pupil's motivation and gives him a feeling of alienation. (p. 52)

Glock (1972) questioned Rosenthal's (1968) experimental design and the interpretation of the data. He did, however, offer other research that does suggest the phenomenon of the self-fulfilling prophesy and he called for more research.

Shotel, Iano, and McGettigan (1972) investigated the attitudes of teachers associated with the integration of the handicapped student. They found that teachers' optimism concerning the integration of handicapped children depended on the specific handicap. Teachers were generally more positive in their attitudes towards the learning disabled than toward the emotionally disturbed and the educable mentally retarded. In regard to the educable mentally retarded, teacher optimism was lower after the experimental mainstreaming program than prior to the experiment, the experience apparently caused a change in attitude. They stated that it was possible that the teachers, in an effort to be cooperative and positive, were initially overly optimistic (p. 692).

Panda and Bartel (1972) and Salvia, Clark and Ysseldyke (1973), in similar studies, both found that labels attached to children did affect the attitudes that were held, by teachers, towards them. Panda and Bartel (1972) found that teachers rated all exceptionalities significantly lower than normal or gifted children. Salvia, Clark, and Ysseldyke

(1973) indicated that the gifted child was seen more positively than the normal child and that the normal child was in turn seen more positively than the retarded child.

Rosenthal (1973) defended his original study against the criticism of others (Snow, 1969; Henrikson, 1971; and Glock, 1972). He argued that his adversaries were too critical of the experimental design and data analysis and ignored the substance of the research. He presented evidence, in the form of other research, which served to confirm his theories. Although Rosenthal named authors and summarized their findings, he did not provide a bibliography or references. He also said that regardless of the procedures used in his research, the fact remains that people who expect good things from others will find good things in others. In explaining his "Pygmalion" effect he wrote:

> the current evidence leads me to propose a four-factor "theory" of the influences that produce the Pygmalion effect. People who have been led to expect good things from their students, children, clients, or what-have-you appear to: (1) create a warmer social-emotional mood around their "special" students (climate); (2) give more feedback to these students about their performance (feedback); (3) teach more material and more difficult material to their special students (input); and (4) give their special students more opportunities to respond and question (output). (p. 60)

Mitchell (1976) reviewed the literature pertaining to the affect teacher attitudes play in the educational process. She wrote that certain circumstances enable a teacher to significantly affect or alter a student's academic or social behavior. Quoting Good and Brophy's (1973) book, Looking in Classrooms, she stated that they call for five necessary steps in order for teacher expectations to become a basis for self-fulfilling prophesies, they are:

> one, the teacher expects specific behavior and achievement from particular students. Two, because of these different expectations, the teacher behaves differently toward different students. Three, this teacher treatment tells each student what behavior and achievement the teacher expects from him and affects his self-concept, achievement motivation, and levels of aspiration. Four, if this teacher treatment is consistent over time and if the student does not actively resist or change it in some way, it will tend to shape his achievement and behavior. High expectation students will be led to achieve at high levels, while the achievement of low-expectation students will decline. And, five, with time, the students' achievement and behavior will conform more and more closely to that originally expected of him. (p. 310)

Mitchell (1976) concluded that "whether the student is in a resource room or a regular classroom, teacher's perceptions and expectations of the student must be positive if maximum positive academic and behavioral growth is to take place" (pp. 310-311).

Khleif (1976) studied role distance as a possible explanation for classroom outcomes. He found that teachers of slow learners were less likely to instruct in a clear manner and were more likely to give contradictory signals in respect to accepted behavior. Also teachers of slow learners strayed from their lesson plans, frequently interspersing sarcastic and threatening comments. These teacher behaviors were not exhibited when the same teachers taught a regular class. Khleif surmised that "teacher behavior may be a function of teacher perception, with role distance being a particular adjustment made by the untrained teacher of slow learners" (p. 72).

Lyon (1977) investigated the nonverbal signals that a teacher may or may not exhibit toward a pupil, especially a handicapped pupil. She found that there was a significant difference in nonverbal communications by the teacher toward individual students social-personal characteristics, perceived academic progress rate, and the teachers personal liking of the pupil. Lyon stated:

> many teachers are sophisticated in verbal methods for reinforcing appropriate social behaviors, but nonverbal types of reinforcement largely have been neglected.

> And, lack of awareness of negative nonverbal behaviors on the part of a teacher could inadvertently encourage undesirable pupil behaviors. (p. 52)

She warned, however, that this study, because of its size (one teacher and twelve students), cannot be generalized to the entire population and recommends further research in this area.

Vacc and Kirst (1977) researched the attitudes regular education teachers held toward emotionally disturbed children. They found that regular education teachers believed that emotionally disturbed children should be segregated, even though they believed mainstreaming would benefit the child. Teachers also viewed emotionally disturbed children as not accepted by normal children, and that placing emotionally disturbed children in a regular class would not be beneficial to the regular children. Teachers also believed that the presence of emotionally disturbed children in the regular class would have a negative effect on the teacher's program and would be less adequate than a special placement for the disturbed child. And, finally, if emotionally disturbed children were to be placed in a regular class, the teacher should have a smaller class size and a teacher aide (pp. 313-314). Vacc and Kirst also called for more research in this area.

Severance and Gasstrom (1977) studied the effects the label "mentally retarded" may affect explanations of success and failure. They found that when a person was

labeled mentally retarded, and that person succeeded at a task, success was attributed to effort or luck. When the label was removed success was attributed to ability. Conversely, when a labeled mentally retarded person failed at a task, failure was attributed to lack of ability, but when a nonlabeled person failed, failure was attributed to bad luck, lack of effort or task difficulty (p. 552).

Moore and Fine (1978) found that teachers of Educable Mentally Handicapped (EMH), Learning Disabled (LD), and the "normal" child had similar images of each of these groupings. The EMH child was seen as a "docile, trusting and dependent person who interacted in very cooperative, conventional ways" (p. 258). All three teacher groups characterized the LD child as being a "socially distant, somewhat frustrated, and pessimistic individual" (p. 258). While describing the regular child as "an independent, leadership-oriented, strong, and self confident individual who was capable of expressing love and eliciting social approval" (p. 258).

Moore and Fine also found that the three teacher groups differed significantly in their acceptance of mainstreamed EMH and LD children--with all teacher groups being more supportive of mainstreaming the LD child than mainstreaming the EMH child (p. 258). One final finding was that all groups of teachers were more willing to take the

LD child and the EMH child when resource personnel were available to supplement the mainstreaming effort.

Alexander and Strain (1978) reviewed the literature applicable to educators' attitudes toward handicapped children and the concept of mainstreaming. They presented research which documented the role teacher's attitudes towards individual pupils play in a classroom setting. They concluded that "the previously cited research indicates a close relationship between the teacher's expectations for the learner and the teacher's treatment of that learner. This relationship may ultimately affect the child's self-expectations and self-image" (p. 394).

Barbara Hendrickson (1978) interviewed teachers to determine their attitudes towards the mainstreaming of handicapped children. She found that teachers were more receptive to physically impaired students than to those whose learning abilities had been impaired. Reasons given by teachers were that the physically handicapped child can still be taught relatively easily, whereas the child who is slow or has emotional problems generates anti-social or disruptive behavior.

Abroms and Kodera (1979) asked subjects to rank a list of handicapping conditions according to their personal acceptability. Subjects were not given defnitions or any other instructions besides being told to rank order the handicapping conditions. The resulting rankings are as follows: (1) Ulcer; (2) Asthma; (3) Diabetes (4) Arthritis;

(5) Learning disability; (6) Speech defect; (7) Deafness; (8) Epilepsy; (9) Tuberculosis; (10) Amputee; (11) Blindness; (12) Cancer; (13) Mental illness; (14) Cerebral palsy; and (15) Mental retardation. The results showed that three of the five handicaps which may be neurological in nature were ranked thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth, the only exceptions were the fifth place ranking of learning disabilities and the eighth place ranking of Epilepsy. Their findings were consistent with previously cited research.

Vance and Willbrown (1979) discussed the effect labeling had on teacher perception. Quoting W. B. Brookover's 1959 article, "A Social Psychological Conception of Classroom Learning," found in School and Society, 87:84-85; they quoted as follows:

> three hypotheses form the basic substance . . . of the relationship between school learning and one's own behavior. They are, one, people learn to behave in ways that each considers appropriate to himself. Two, appropriateness of behavior is defined by each person through the internalization of the expectation of their "significant others." And, three, the individual learns what he believes the "significant others" expect him to learn in the classroom and other situations. (pp. 408-409)

Foley (1979) conducted a study to determine how labeling and teacher behaviors may affect children's attitudes. He wrote:

> the results demonstrated that in a videotape situation, the positive and negative reaction of a teacher to a child's behavior can have significant effects on peer acceptance of the child. This effect was present whether the child was labeled as normal, mentally retarded, or learning disabled. (p. 382)

Dworkin (1979) searched the literature concerning the theory of existent expectations. She stated, "it was clear that a direct link between expectation and performance had been established in almost every area of human interaction" (p. 519).

Horne (1979) reviewed the literature applicable to attitudes and mainstreaming. Although her review was aimed at the School Psychologist, her findings were appropo to the educator. After reviewing some sixty books and articles, Horne reached the following conclusion:

> the results of the studies that have been done are supportive of three basic premises. First of all, professionals, family members, and peers may be expected to hold negative attitudes toward the handicapped mainstreamed student that may affect every aspect of societal

interaction. Secondly, they cannot be assumed to be competent providers of appropriate intellectual, psychological, and emotional growth experiences for the student with special needs. Finally all can be retrained through a program involving educative and experiential aspects to interact more effectively with the handicapped. (pp. 64-65)

Modifying Educator's Attitudes

The research seemed to bear out the theory that the attitudes teachers hold towards an individual do indeed affect that person's education. Attitude being defined as "organized reactions of an individual toward something in his environment (object, person, process or idea) as a result of previous knowledge and/or experience" (Jordan and Proctor, 1969, p. 433).

If indeed teacher attitudes affect student learning, it would be beneficial to modify negative teacher attitudes and create positive attitudes. Dworkin and Dworkin (1979); Harasymiw and Horne (1975); Glass and Meckler (1972); Brooks and Bransford (1971); and Haring, Stern, and Cruickshank (1958) conducted studies to determine the feasibility of modifying the attitudes of teachers towards handicapped children--all efforts were effective in varying degrees. Mitchell (1976) wrote, "Regardless how deeply entrenched, attitudes can be influenced and changed, just as any other behavior can be unlearned or modified" (p. 308).

Hughes (1978) wrote "attitudes toward disabled persons become more positive as information and degree of contact increase" (p. 78). He continued

> several studies have been reported which demonstrate the effectiveness of the workshop format, sometimes coupled with direct experience with handicapped students in changing teacher attitudes toward the handicapped and mainstreaming in a positive direction. (p. 78)

The inservice education of teachers appeared to be the primary means of modifying attitudes. Haring, et al., (1958) conducted an inservice/workshop in an attempt to modify teacher attitudes. The workshop format included instruction of teachers, by professionals, and providing opportunity for the teachers to work with handicapped children. The results of their efforts were summarized by the following statements: (1) The teachers from each of the four schools increased significantly in their information and understanding of exceptional children. (2) Increase in information does not necessarily effect increases in attitudes of acceptance on the part of teachers. (3) The teachers became significantly more accepting of exceptional children as a result of the workshop experiences. (4) The teachers from the two schools which enrolled the largest number of handicapped children demonstrated the greatest modification in their attitudes of acceptance toward these children. (5) The teachers did not become

more realistic in their judgments of the most accurate placement of exceptional children as a result of the workshop. (6) Changes in attitudes toward exceptional children did not involve measurable changes in the basic personality characteristic of the teachers. (7) The responses of the teachers became more positive, i.e., they responded with less sympathy or rejection and more concrete procedures for working with exceptional children. (8) The workshops did not effect positive responses from the teachers with regard to their own adjustment, or their adjustment to their superiors and peers. (9) The teachers were able to incorporate the increased acceptance and understanding they experienced from the workshop in their day-to-day teaching relationship with exceptional children. (p. 128)

Haring, Stern and Cruickshank agreed that attitudes could be modified if the teacher received more information about the handicapped child and the teacher was able to experience working with those children.

However, teacher experiences with special education students will not, in themselves, lead to more positive attitudes by those teachers (Haring, et al., 1958). Jordan and Proctor (1969) reconfirmed this opinion in a study they conducted in a Michigan school district.

The results of a study by Brooks and Bransford (1971) indicated that efforts to acquaint regular teachers with the attitudes and behavioral characteristics of exceptional children were beneficial. They wrote:

Based on this investigation, notable attitude shifts toward the concept of special education were recorded. It would appear that because of the lack of knowledge concerning the role and function of special education, many regular educators are not willing to accept children found in these programs. In conjunction with the concept special education, the concept integration was significantly affected in a positive manner. This would give further support to the statement that perhaps if regular classroom teachers and administrators became informed about special education goals they would be more willing to accept the handicapped in the regular class. (p. 260)

Glass and Meckler (1972) worked with eighteen teachers and thirty-eight handicapped children in an eight week summer workshop. As a result of this workshop, they found:

> in the area of attitudes and beliefs, it appears that trainees viewed themselves as more competent in their ability to teach mildly handicapped children in their regular classrooms and more attracted to the notion of maintaining such children in regular classes. Consistent with these attitudinal changes were perceived increases in specific diagnostic and remedial teaching management skills. (p. 155)

Martin (1974) stated "there must be massive efforts . . . not to just 'instruct them' [regular teachers] . . . but to share in the feelings, to understand their fears, to provide them with assistance and materials, and in short, to assure their success" (p. 152). Brimm and Tollett (1974) and Harasymiw and Horne (1975) and Harasymiw and Horne (1976) stressed the importance of inservicing. Harasymiw and Horne (1975) wrote "retraining programs, inservice experiences, and workshop approaches would appear to be viable alternatives" (p. 157). Again, Harasymiw and Horne (1976) stated, "results indicate that teacher opinions and attitudes on integration issues can be modified through an inservice program . . ." (p. 399).

Mitchell (1976) wrote "experience is a change agent" (p. 308) although not necessarily towards a positive gain. She went on to state that, "changes in attitudes can be achieved through planned experiences such as inservice workshops, and through provision for adequate supportive services" (p. 308).

Vacc and Kirst (1977), Flynn, et al., (1978), found that regular education teachers did not feel adequate to teach handicapped children. They reported in separate studies that regular teachers believed that inservice and additional college coursework would better prepare them to teach the handicapped student. Flynn, et al., however, reported that

a significant number of regular education teachers 40% to 50%) were not willing to attend inservice workshops, and even more (60% to 70%) were unwilling to enroll in graduate level courses (p. 562).

Skrtic, Knowlton, and Clark (1979) likewise, reported the need for teacher inservice. They, like Flynn, et al., (1978), raised a significant question. They wrote, "perhaps the most critical attitude variables that must be sampled are attitudes toward the inservice program and changes in attitudes toward handicapped students as a result of the program" (p. 12). They called for more research into this area, for if the attitudes of teachers are negative toward the inservice workshops, they questioned the effectiveness of such workshops. They argued that it may be necessary to deal with these attitudes prior to attempting changes of regular education teacher's attitudes towards handicapped children.

Finally, Horne (1979) summarized, in her literature review:

> training programs designed for professionals, peers, and parents should be both knowledge- and experience-based. Training approaches designed for classroom teachers thus should provide an interface between their own classroom experiences with students and their introduction to new knowledge. Positive attitudinal shifts that in turn will facilitate new behaviors can occur only if teachers are presented with training experiences that are relevant,

and that upon implementation yield observable success. (p. 65)

Summary

The research presented points to the fact that attitudes held by teachers towards the handicapped student will indeed affect the success or failure of any attempt to mainstream the exceptional child.

That teachers' attitudes of the handicapped student are generally negative in nature.

That modification of these attitudes can be accomplished best by combining an informational (inservice/workshop) with an experiential program.

Further research is welcome in all areas affecting the formation of attitudes, to include how these attitudes may affect the interactions between teacher and student. In particular more information on how to effectively conduct inservice/workshops would also be welcome. And, more research is called for in the area of apparent teacher rejection of the inservice process and graduate level coursework. For if further research confirms that the general teacher population rejects inservice/college coursework, it will be necessary to modify these negative attitudes prior to affecting changes in teachers' attitudes toward the handicapped child.

CHAPTER III

INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

It was the purpose of this study to not only review the literature applicable to teacher attitudes and how to modify those attitudes, if necessary, but to relate this research to the following concerns: (1) implications for the regular education teacher; (2) implications for the special education teacher; (3) implications for the handicapped student; and (4) implications for the future of mainstreaming.

Implications for the Regular Education Teacher

It is essential that each teacher have an honest awareness of the attitudes he has towards his students. It is "human" to like or dislike some students more than others, what is important is that the teacher recognizes this fact, for then he can apply fair and helpful treatment to all the students in his class (Mitchell, 1976).

The teacher must examine the basis for his biases and then be prepared to modify his attitudes if effective treatment of the handicapped student is to be accomplished.

Future teachers should plan their college program to include coursework that would prepare them to deal with the handicapped student in all facets of their education. Contracted teachers must be willing to take graduate level courses and inservice/workshop training in order to expand their knowledge of the handicapped child (Brimm and Tollett, 1974; and Flynn, Gacka, & Sundean, 1978).

The regular teacher needs to prepare himself to recognize the characteristics of any and all handicapping conditions which may be encountered in his classroom. This is necessary in order to accurately assess the student's strengths and weaknesses and his needs and wants. This information is also vital to enable the regular teacher to properly and efficiently refer the student to the proper supportive personnel. The first step in acquiring assistance for the child in need starts with the regular education teacher.

The regular teacher also needs to acquaint himself with the law(s) that affect the education of the handicapped student. A thorough understanding of what is legal and what is illegal would greatly expedite the education of all handicapped children.

The regular education teacher should also strive to learn as much about the methods, materials and techniques pertinent to each handicapped student, so that he, the teacher, can more effectively deal with the individual student's particular strengths and weaknesses.

Finally, the regular teacher must maintain a spirit of cooperation with the specialist. The lines of communication must remain open. It is through these 'lines' that the regular education teacher and the special education teacher can jointly work together to best educate the handicapped child. Cruickshank (1952) summarized the necessary "needs" that a regular education teacher should have to truly understand the exceptional child. And, although he wrote some twenty-seven years ago, his advice is still very much appropriate. He wrote:

> General educators need to recognize that exceptional children are first and foremost children with all the characteristics and developmental problems of all other children of comparable mental age, chronological age, and sex. General educators need to recognize that because a child wears a mechanical instrument to help him hear, because he uses a cane, because he wears glasses, because he has to have special medication, or because of some other form of differentiation, he is not basically different from others. General educators need to recognize that many of the so-called problems of exceptional children are those created by and impressed upon the child by a thoughtless society as the child, in the process of growth and development, seeks to extend the horizons of his own self-concept and ego maturation.

General educators need to have a thorough understanding of techniques for identification of those problems which logically are within the responsibility of the regular class and school and those which are the real responsibility of the specialist teacher and special facility. General educators need to have had sufficient experience during their preparatory years with exceptional children of all types, through observation, participation, case study, seminar discussion, and lecture, so as to provide themselves with the security necessary to meet the exceptional child realistically later on in the classroom situation. General educators need to have insight which will permit them to deal with specialist teachers, with itinerant consultants, with special education coordinators or supervisors effectively, meaningfully, and in keeping with the best modern educational practices to the advantage of the exceptional child. General educators need to have respect for and appreciation of the contributions of the special class teacher. (p. 50)

Implications for the Special Education Teacher

The attitudes that the regular education teachers have towards the handicapped student will affect the special education teacher. In order to effect an efficient model

for mainstreaming the handicapped child, the special education teacher will need to ascertain the atmosphere within the school. If the specialist finds himself in a hostile setting he will most certainly need to modify the negative attitudes of the staff in order to best serve the needs of the handicapped student.

In order to be an effective special education teacher, the specialist needs to develop a mastery of his trade. The future teacher will need to prepare in college for the assignments that lie ahead. Current specialists should consider enrolling in graduate level courses and attend in-service training to further increase the quantity and quality of information they have regarding the handicapped child. The more information, the more resources and the more confidence the specialist has concerning his specialty the more able he will be to assist the regular teacher in instructing the handicapped student.

The specialist must have organizational skills. The specialist must be consistent. By being organized, the specialist will best be able to assist the staff in an efficient and expedient manner. Consistency is essential so as to build a reputation as a reliable and trustworthy professional. Without consistency, from the specialist, the regular education staff may become confused, disillusioned and negative towards the specialist, carryover to the program in general and the handicapped child, in particular, would be eminent.

Professionalism is a must. The specialist must be able to develop a healthy rapport with the staff. Treating peers as peers, not as ill-informed/ignorant associates is necessary. The specialist cannot "talk down" or feel superior to the regular education teacher. The results of such attitudes will only result in ill will and eventually it will be the children who will suffer.

The specialist needs to involve the principal in the total program. The importance of the administrator encouraging and supporting the specialist cannot be overemphasized (Mitchell, 1976).

Cochran and Westling (1977) stated that "a key figure in that implementation (mainstream model) is the school principal, the person in the position to provide needed administrative support and to ensure success" (p. 506). They offered ten suggestions for a principal to follow so that he could ensure implementation of a successful mainstreaming program. The ten suggestions are as follows: (1) Principals should become cognizant of the characteristics of handicapped children. (2) Regular classroom teachers should be provided with inservice so that they can become cognizant of the characteristics of the handicapped child. (3) The principal should provide additional sources of information on exceptional children's education--provide professional journals in teacher workrooms, etc. (4) The

principal should utilize special educators as support personnel to conduct inservice. (5) The principal should consider all alternatives for support. Provide aides/ paraprofessionals and itinerant/consultant teacher time. (6) The principal should utilize community resources. (7) The principal should allow for a special materials fund to be used by the regular education teacher. (8) The principal should encourage teachers to educate normal children about handicaps. (9) The principal should provide support for the exceptional child. And (10), the principal should provide support for the faculty (pp. 507-509).

The special education teacher must be an advocate for his students. The attitudes he holds towards his own handicapped students will be projected to the regular teaching staff; if he is negative, the staff will most likely also be negative; if he is positive the staff may be inclined to be positive.

One way that the specialist can project a healthy attitude is to minimize the usage of labels. Research has shown that labels do affect teacher expectations. These studies have shown that when a teacher is given a list of behavioral characteristics, as opposed to a blanket label for a specific child, the teacher will be more likely to have more positive attitudes and greater expectancies for

the unlabeled child (Combs and Harper, 1967; and Gillung and Rucker, 1977).

The effects that labels have on children have been well documented. Dunn (1968) called for the removal of all labels, recommended that teachers be trained in all specialties, compared approach to the country doctor school of teaching. Mitchell (1976) stated "it appears that one of the most devastating practices for exceptional students is the effect of being labeled" (p. 310).

The specialist will need to prepare for inservicing the staff. Some of the most effective inservice is of an informal--lunchroom inservice--nature. Getting information to the teacher in this manner may be even more effective than formal inservicing, especially when one considers the possibility that teachers are resistant to attending formal inservice training (Skrtic, et al., 1979).

When the specialist does develop inservice training he needs to do so with a great deal of thoughtfulness. Brimm and Tollett (1974) reported that teachers need to provide input, their needs determined, specific objectives developed and follow-up procedures employed to determine if objectives were met. Brimm and Tollett stated that too often administrators select inservice material without regard to the needs of teachers. This procedure should be changed.

An inservice program for teachers should include: (1) definitions of all handicapping conditions; (2) specific characteristics of handicapping conditions to assist teachers in identifying special students; (3) instruction in usage of diagnostic measures to aide in identifying; (4) requirements specified by both state and federal law; (5) specific instructions in the methods, materials, and techniques to be used to teach the handicapped students; and (6) information to be used to control/modify the behaviors of the handicapped student.

Finally the specialist needs to investigate the various mainstreaming models. He needs to work with, and receive input from all staff members and then put the program into action. It is especially important in lieu of recent articles that question the "pell-mell" rush to mainstream (Martin, 1974), to obtain input from the staff concerning all factors of program implementation.

Brooks (1979) reported that teachers are becoming resentful and frustrated. They feel that the move to mainstream has been "too much too soon;" kids are "dumped" with no help for the teacher; and concerns for cheating the normal student are being voiced (pp. 58-59).

In summary, the special education teacher must increase his knowledge, strengthen his organizational skills, be a professional, be consistent at all times, and become an advocate for his students. The specialist needs to in-service the staff in regards to useful materials and

techniques, diagnostic and identifying procedures, and the implications of state and federal law. He needs to receive input from staff. And he needs to implement a mutually acceptable mainstream program based on open communication and mutual cooperation. If the specialist and the regular teacher can learn to work together it will be the child who will experience the fruits of their labor.

Implications for the Handicapped Child

The research has shown that the attitudes that teachers hold towards the handicapped child makes the student no casual bystander. The student needs to be aware of the potential danger that a teacher's negative attitude may have for him. The student can take a number of steps to project a positive image. The more positive an image the student projects of himself the more likely teachers will have a positive attitude towards him.

Students will need to know themselves in order to have a positive image of themselves. With the assistance of his parents and his special education teacher(s) the student should gain an awareness of his handicap. The student should know what his handicap means, its definition and its specific characteristics. He should know precisely his own strengths and weaknesses, and how these strengths and weaknesses will affect him in the classroom.

The student should be trained and become competent in compensatory skills in order to overcome his weaknesses.

He also should be taught how to best use his strengths in the school setting.

Again, with the aid of his parents and special education teacher(s) the student needs to work on developing a positive self-concept. When the student is comfortable with who he is, he will be ready to make progress in the mainstream.

Implications for the Future of Mainstreaming

The research has confirmed that teacher attitudes play an important role in the education of handicapped children. That the teachers with positive attitudes will be more likely to cooperate in any mainstreaming model. It is, therefore, essential to create a positive atmosphere among a teaching staff.

If the staff of any given school does not cooperate, communicate, and project a coordinated effort, the chances for success of any mainstreaming model are slim.

It is important in the early years of P.L. 94-142's implementation that steps taken are thought out and carefully inacted. If administrator, regular education teachers, and special education teachers cooperate today their efforts will be rewarded in the future. If all concerned refuse to compromise or cooperate, the faulty foundation laid today will take years to reconstruct, and it will be only the handicapped student who will suffer in the end.

Personal Observations

This researcher accepts the theory that attitudes do indeed effect the way a teacher interacts with his students. In particular, there is little doubt in this author's mind that the general population of teachers hold a rather dim view toward the physically and mentally handicapped. Most would rather not encounter the handicapped student in their classrooms. Whether the regular education teacher feels inadequate, due to lack of knowledge of the handicapped student, and the methods, materials, and techniques necessary to teach such students, or the teacher simply does not want to be inconvenienced with one of "those" in his room, is not known by this author.

It is not uncommon, however, to walk the halls of our schools and have teachers ask "is he one of YOURS," or to hear all special education students referred to as "Special C" (term used in Milwaukee Public Schools to refer to the program for the Educable Mentally Retarded; the term is no longer used in an official capacity) by a staff member. Whether the teacher means to be derogatory or not is of little significance, because in the eyes of the handicapped child the phrase is both demeaning and cruel.

This author has serious doubts that administrators are familiar with the special needs and wants of the handicapped student. Planning is usually done without input from special education staff.

Milwaukee Public School's administrators continue to plan inservice training that is ignored and resented by the teaching staff.

In short, this author believes that, even though great strides have been made in the education of the handicapped in our schools, we still have a long way to go before we are truly educating all of our children.

In conclusion, this author believes that there is a continual need for comprehensive and meaningful inservice training for all staff members who are involved with the education of the handicapped child--ideally this would include everyone within the school. If administrators, special education teachers, and regular education teachers begin to work together they may begin to develop successful mainstreaming programs. And if colleges and universities begin to prepare teachers in all areas of educating children, the future of the handicapped student can only be bright.

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